

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

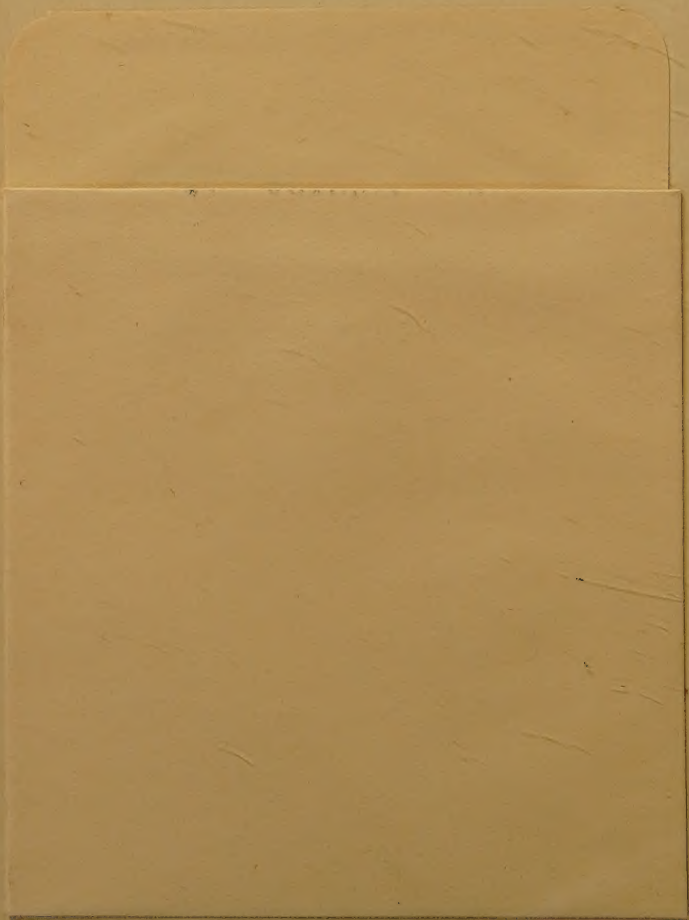


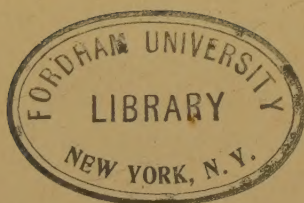
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A LITTLE BOOK OF CHURCH ETIQUETTE

OR

*How to Behave before Our Lord
in the Blessed Sacrament
and at Devotional Exercises in General*

BY

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FREELY ADAPTED TO AMERICAN CONDITIONS

BY

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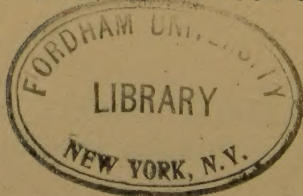
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Foreword

Not a few who are very careful to observe the rules of polite society pay little attention to what may be called good manners in church.

Some, for example, have the habit of looking around during divine service, even at the solemn moment of Consecration. Instead of kneeling, they either remain sitting comfortably in their pew, or, if they stand up, they make only a slight bow of the head in the presence of the Lord of eternal majesty, who deigns to come down from Heaven to offer His Sacred Body and Precious Blood for our salvation. Will any one say that this is proper and correct?

Even educated men and women of refined manners now and then assume in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament an atti-

Foreword

tude which is far from devout or edifying. Would not Christ, if He were to appear visibly in such an ill-mannered gathering, say what He once said to the incredulous Jews: "I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me; but I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth." (John VIII, 49 sq.)

May this booklet help to open the eyes of such careless Catholics, that they may see the impropriety of their conduct and change it. At the Last Judgment God will undoubtedly call us to account for the carelessness we have been guilty of during divine service.

F. L.

St. Francis, Wis.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1928

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CHAPTER I

Man's Sole Purpose is to Glorify God

The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands. (Ps. XVIII, 1.)

GOD is the final end and object of creation. "I am," He Himself tells us in the Apocalypse (I, 8), "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."

St. Thomas Aquinas says that God made everything for Himself. This can only mean that He created the universe for His glory. Consequently He is the last goal towards which all rational creatures tend and in whom they will ultimately find their happiness. Holy Scripture testifies to this

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in the book of Proverbs (XVI, 4) : "The Lord has made all things for Himself," or, as the Hebrew text has it, "for His praise."

Now, since God, interiorly, by His very nature, is filled with an abundance of all that is good, the glory He seeks from His creatures can only be external. In the superabundance of His goodness He has endowed angels and men with His gifts and, as far as possible, wills that they should be happy in His service.

I said that God has first of all in Himself an internal honor or glory, which, be it explained, is nothing else but His infinite perfection. Being infinitely perfect in Himself, it follows that God possesses within Himself an infinite glory. His external glory is the revelation of His infinite essence, which challenges admiration, reverence, praise, and love. His internal glory He possesses from all eternity, whereas His external glory began when He created the world. His inward glory cannot be sep-

Man's Sole Purpose

arated from Him, for it belongs to His very essence. His exterior glory, on the other hand, is accidental or contingent. His inward glory admits of no increase; it is eternal as He Himself is eternal, whereas His external glory is subject to increase and decrease.

All creatures contribute towards God's external glory, but especially angels and men, who are endowed with understanding and free will and therefore can know and serve Him. How wretched then is the condition of those who neglect God and even go so far as to offend Him by sinful conduct!

In the Canticle *Benedicite* in the book of Daniel, which the Church has inserted into her divine office (*Lauds*), the three young men whom King Nabuchodonosor had thrown into the fiery furnace suddenly found themselves miraculously saved and burst out into a loud hymn of praise and thanksgiving, calling upon all creatures,

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animate and inanimate, to glorify God. And why should they not do this? The celestial bodies, the sun, moon and stars, move in constant rotation just as God commands them to do. The minerals and metals in the bowels of the earth undergo chemical changes; plants, flowers and trees produce their fruit; animals follow their instincts exactly as they have been ordered to do under what is known as the natural law, which in its last analysis is nothing else than the will of the Creator.

Again, are not the multifarious forms which these creatures, both animate and inanimate, present, so many manifestations of God's infinite perfections? This visible world of ours is like a book filled with all kinds of pictures placed before the eyes of men, showing them the greatness of God; as St. Paul says: "The invisible things of Him [God] are clearly seen" (Rom. I, 20).

Man's Sole Purpose

Last but not least the glory of God is promoted by the fact that all creatures are destined to provide man with what he needs to sustain life, which has in turn been given him to be used for the honor and glory of God.

When we reflect on all this, we ought to be ashamed of our carelessness and want of zeal in promoting the glory of God, for which inanimate nature exhausts itself.

Jesus Christ, the Godman, promotes the glory of God in a far more sublime manner than all creatures together. "I honor my Father" (John VIII, 49). Jesus is infinitely superior to all creatures, who are as nothing compared to Him. Therefore, the eternal Father receives through Him more honor than from the entire creation.

The Son of God honored His Father most of all by redeeming mankind with His precious Blood. He alone has restored the honor of the Blessed Trinity, which had

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been tarnished by sin, and enabled men to again earn Heaven through grace. Must I, proud man, not be ashamed for refusing to the humble Godman the honor he deserves in the Blessed Sacrament, where He is present only to assist us in rendering due honor to God the Father and the Holy Ghost? The Church reminds us of this fact during the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, when, immediately after the solemn moment of Consecration, the priest moves the sacred Host three times in the form of a cross over the chalice, saying: "By Him and through Him and in Him all honor and glory is given to Thee, the Omnipotent Father, in union with the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever."

Should not all this induce us to assist at the Eucharistic Sacrifice with greater devotion and with sentiments of awe and admiration, in order that we may participate in its fruits and be filled with an abundance of grace?

Man's Sole Purpose

SOME PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

A person reflecting on what has been said thus far might assume that Catholics are always careful to put these doctrines into practice. But is this actually the case? We shall answer this question with a few examples taken from everyday life.

It is Sunday. As usual, Holy Mass is to be celebrated in church, and if the congregation is large, several Masses will be said. The time and hour for the Masses is, or should be, well known to all.

Most Catholics are punctual; but others are tardy. Even after the last bell has rung they prefer to remain outside for a while to smoke or discuss politics, or business, or baseball, or golf. They enter the church when the priest is about to start with the gospel and leave again immediately after Communion. With such an ungenerous and stingy spirit towards God, can they expect

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to assist at Mass with the proper attention and devotion?

We often hear of Saturday night dances. They are, to say the least, a great nuisance. Catholics who go to such dances easily fall into the habit of missing Mass the next morning, or, if they attend, they are likely to sleep during a considerable portion of the service. They never or very seldom attend vespers or other afternoon service. Instead they take automobile trips, go fishing, or visit the movies. May we not apply to them the words of St. Paul (Rom. I, 25) : "They worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator"?

Yet, lest someone accuse us of injustice or undue faultfinding, we must consider certain exceptions. Housewives, for instance, who have to attend to the kitchen and the table, mothers who have small babies at home in the care of strangers or older children, may be compelled to leave the church before the last gospel. Clerks and servant

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girls working in hotels and restaurants must be at work on time or they may be discharged. These cannot be blamed for their hasty departure.

On Catholic holydays (unless they are also legal holidays, such as Christmas or New Year) quite a number of Catholics find it difficult to come to the late Masses. Provision is usually made for them by giving them an opportunity to attend Mass at an early hour, at five or six o'clock, or at any rate before the business or working day begins. Good Catholics will certainly make use of the opportunity thus offered them.

CHAPTER II

Public Religious Services and Private Devotions

This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. (Matth. XV, 8.)

PRAYER is a devout conversation with the invisible God. Whenever people expect to have an audience with a distinguished personage, they carefully prepare themselves for the address they intend to make or the petition they wish to present. Should we not do the same when we are on the point of addressing the Most High, the great and omnipotent Lord of Heaven and earth? Even when we send up our prayers alone and outside of the church, we ought to dispose our hearts for a moment and try to assume an exterior attitude that conforms

Public and Private Devotions

to the act which we are about to perform. With much greater care should we proceed when we are in church, where Jesus Christ is really present in the tabernacle, even though invisible to our bodily eyes. In the Book of Ecclesiasticus (XXXV, 20 f.) we read: "He that adoreth God with joy, shall be accepted, and his prayer shall approach even to the clouds: and till it come nigh he will not be comforted: and he will not depart till the most High behold." Words like these should be recalled when we begin conversing with God in prayer. It will help us considerably to assume the proper attitude and to make our prayer more effective.

There are different methods or forms of prayer. We distinguish between vocal and interior prayer. In vocal prayer the words expressing our thoughts are actually spoken, at least, to such an extent and with such a tone of voice that the individual can hear himself pray while the organs of speech (lips and tongue) are in motion. All the

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prayers prescribed for the public functions of the sacred ministry, Holy Mass, the Divine Office, and the administration of the Sacraments, must be recited in this way. Prayers to which an indulgence is attached, must also be said vocally, lest the indulgence be not gained. Vocal prayers, however, must not be mechanical recitations, but acts performed with attention and a devout disposition.

The attention given to vocal prayers may be threefold. First we may keep God, to whom the prayer is directed, constantly before our mind. The words spoken are merely, as it were, outbursts of inward recollection.

Or, second, we may endeavor to grasp the meaning of the words which the lips utter, yielding at the same time to such emotions or aspirations of the heart as the words suggest.

The third mode of attention is limited to the spoken words, even if their sense is

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not understood, provided, of course, that the one who prays has the habitual intention of piously conversing with God. In this case a person must take care that the words are distinctly articulated.

The first and third mode can be employed by all, even those who are illiterate. The second can be observed only by those who are fairly well educated and who, in particular, are familiar with the language in which the prayers are said, for example, Latin. As a rule, only priests and religious are able to lend such attention. No matter which mode we may adopt, our prayer will not fail to be heard according to the words of Ecclesiasticus (XXXV, 12): "Give to the most High according to what He hath given to thee, and with a good eye do according to the ability of thy hands."

Interior prayer is a prayer performed without audibly uttering any words. The mind alone is engaged in prayer. No sharp distinction can be drawn between vocal and

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interior prayer because in practice they often go hand in hand according to the old saying: "The lips flow over when the heart is full."

A special form of interior prayer is *meditation*. Koch-Preuss (*Handbook of Moral Theology*, Vol. IV, p. 146) says of it:

"Meditation may be defined as the application of the three powers of the soul to prayer—the memory proposing a religious or moral truth, the understanding considering this truth in its application to the meditating individual, the will forming practical resolutions and asking for grace to keep them. . . .

"The essential constituents of meditation are the preparatory prayer, realization of the divine presence, a lively consideration of the truths proposed, application of the same to one's personal needs, the making of practical resolutions with regard to them, . . . and the final prayer, which should include thanksgiving, self-oblation, and a petition for the graces necessary to keep the good resolutions made. . . .

"Not only people who belong to the edu-

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cated classes are able to meditate, but also the so-called 'little souls' or the simple-minded. All that is required is a good will and a firm determination to keep one's mind well recollected."

The highest stage of meditation is reached in contemplation. "Contemplation," says the same authority, "is the final act of meditation by which the soul flies straightway into the presence of God and beholds Him directly,—not by intuition, as the pure spirits behold Him in Heaven,—but discursively, *i. e.*, by means of the truths and principles suggested by the preceding meditation. Contemplation is called ordinary or acquired, if it is the result of one's own endeavor, aided by divine grace; infused, passive or extraordinary, when directly infused by God."

No one should attempt to reach the heights of contemplation before he has made great progress in virtue and proved his fidelity to God by a life of suffering and mortification.

Pious Catholics pray not only in church, but also at home, indeed, everywhere and at any moment when their hearts are drawn

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towards Heaven, when they are inwardly troubled, when they long for consolation or when temptations assail them. Short and devout ejaculations uttered at such times, though they may be crude in form, are very effective because they come from the heart.

Our Holy Mother the Church possesses several official books of etiquette, the Ritual, the Missal, etc., which regulate divine services and the administration of the Sacraments in every detail. Every priest, from the humblest country curate to His Holiness the Pope, is bound to follow these regulations (rubrics) with the greatest care, not only in order to discharge the duties of his office properly, but also to give a good example to the faithful. The ordinary faithful are not slow to notice the difference between a priest who celebrates Mass or administers the Sacraments with devotion and deep reverence and one who does so hastily or as a mere matter of routine. A few his-

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toric incidents may serve as illustrations.

During the famous *Kulturkampf* in Germany an exiled German priest was staying at Arlon (Belgium) in order to learn the English language, as he intended to do missionary work in England. He said Mass in the parish church every day with such intense devotion that the people were greatly edified. A lukewarm Catholic, who had entered the church through curiosity, seeing this priest at the altar and attracted by his dignified bearing, could not help exclaiming: "This priest believes in what he does. His conduct shows it. Now I, too, believe again!" He went to the church of the Jesuits, made his confession, and began a new life. The case created quite a sensation and was reported in all the Catholic papers of Belgium.

Another example is related of Cardinal Mermillod. When he was still a simple vicar at Geneva, Switzerland, he delivered a sermon on the worship due to our Lord

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in the Blessed Sacrament, exhorting the faithful to observe proper decorum in genuflecting and in folding their hands. It was his custom to visit the church every evening before retiring, partly to attend to the sanctuary lamp, partly to pay his homage of adoration to our Lord in the tabernacle. If no one was in church, he would kneel down and kiss the floor and then pray with outstretched hands. One evening, when he was about to leave the church, a lady emerged from the confessional. As she approached the priest, who was somewhat frightened, she said to him: "I am the daughter of a Protestant minister; I listened to your sermons on the Holy Eucharist and I was edified; yet I doubted whether you believed what you said, and therefore I came here to watch you. To my great satisfaction I see that you show profound respect to Jesus Christ in the tabernacle. I now believe in the Real Presence and I am ready to embrace the Catholic faith."

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These examples show how important it is to behave becomingly in church and to preserve proper decorum in the house of God. Priests and clerics especially (also servers, sextons, etc.) should discharge their functions in such a way as to edify the people.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

Parents and educators take pains to teach their children or pupils those forms of politeness which are expected of people who move in refined society. They know that it will help them to preserve their purity of heart and mind and protect them against the excesses to which human nature yields but too easily. This being so, it is all the more important that Catholic fathers and mothers should instill into the minds of their offspring a profound respect towards God, because the religious impressions received in early youth will remain

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with them during the rest of their lives. Moreover, simple and sincere piety of the child often reacts favorably upon the parents. Does not Christ himself say: "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven"? (Mt. XVIII, 3.)

Properly trained children will make the Sign of the Cross, fold their hands, and perform the other religious exercises just as they have been instructed by their teachers. In church they will genuflect reverently before the tabernacle, and not act like many adults, who bend their knees but slightly and indifferently. Parents and instructors should keep this in mind lest they scandalize the little ones.

Together with the priest, who is the principal functionary in church, there are others engaged in minor work. Thus in large city churches there is a *sacristan* or *janitor* who attends to the furnace, sweeps and cleans the church, rings the bell, looks after the

Sacristans and Mass-Servers

sanctuary lamp, locks the doors at night and unlocks them in the morning. These duties often compel him to pass through the sanctuary. When a person is brought into constant contact with holy things he is likely to become too familiar with them, and familiarity is apt to breed disrespect or indifference. A sacristan should watch himself in this regard lest he lose the respect due to God and holy things. The faithful are shocked or scandalized when they see him pass the altar without genuflecting or bowing.

Mass-servers or *acolytes*, too, must observe proper decorum in their ministry. In the first centuries of the Christian era the office of serving Mass was performed by young clerics who had received the tonsure and minor orders in preparation for the priesthood. Nowadays this work is done by boys up to the age of twelve or fourteen. Wherever there is a well-organized parochial school, the pastor will not find it dif-

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ficult to select a sufficient number of boys to serve at the altar. Not all boys are qualified for this office and hence a selection must be made, either by the priest himself or by the teachers. Only boys of fair talents and good character ought to be admitted. Mischievous lads of evil habits should be excluded, at least until their conduct shows improvement.

Before they are allowed to serve Mass, these boys must be properly instructed. In some places this instruction is given by the teacher or the Sister who has charge of the school and grade in which the boy happens to be. But the priest (pastor or assistant) should examine the boys before they are admitted to serve and make sure that they know the prayers and can recite them distinctly and with good articulation. Genuflections, bows, and other ceremonies should be performed in a proper and graceful manner. Mass-servers must be neat and punc-

Ushers and Collectors

tual, and wear the clerical garb, cassock and surplice, while they serve at Mass.

A well-drilled corps of acolytes will not fail to edify the people. On the other hand, it makes a bad impression when altar boys hurry disrespectfully through the aisles of the church, gossip, nay whistle in the sacristy or stand in the doorway with their hands in their pockets. The server should know that his ministry is a holy function and must, therefore, be performed reverently and devoutly.

Another class of persons who are engaged in church on Sundays, are *ushers* and *collectors*. In small congregations usually one of the trustees will attend to this business, but in large parishes as a rule several men are appointed for the purpose. Ushers are appointed to keep order among the faithful. Special seats or chairs close to the entrance of the church should be reserved for them. A church is not a theater or lecture hall.

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Every Catholic has a right to enter and even non-Catholics should not be debarred, unless they show disrespect. The ushers, therefore, ought to be polite towards all who come to participate in the services. After the service has begun, they should remain inside the church and not stand in the vestibule talking and chatting. They should be at their post, but not look around all the time. They should pray like the rest of the congregation.

As to the *collectors*, it cannot be denied that the gathering of money in church looks out of place. Yet where it is necessary, good Catholics will not find fault with the practice, provided it is carried on in a becoming manner. Unfortunately abuses sometimes creep in. The ecclesiastical authorities have forbidden the collection of an entrance fee at the church door, and justly so, for the house of God is not a museum or a picture show. All who wish to enter should be allowed to do so. Only after the worshippers

Ushers and Collectors

have chosen their places and are seated, may a contribution be demanded of them. A zealous priest or pastor will not fail to explain this to his flock, appealing to their charity and their duty of supporting religion. If this is done from time to time in a kindly way, the people will not protest; on the contrary, they will readily pay their just dues to the church, just as they pay the taxes levied upon them by the civil authorities.

The *collection box* should not be passed around during the whole Mass, but only between the Offertory and the Sanctus. With the Sanctus begins the Canon, which is the most solemn part of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The faithful must not be disturbed when the Consecration is drawing nigh, and still less during the Consecration itself. It is not a time for money matters when the Lord of Hosts is about to descend upon the altar and while He is present there. The attention of the worshippers

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should be concentrated upon the great mystery which takes place during these precious moments.

Another class of persons who take an active part in the celebration of the Mass, at least of a High Mass, are the *organist* and the *choir singers*. Singing in church is as much a sacred function as is praying. Those who are engaged in this function must by their conduct and bearing contribute to the honor of God and the edification of the faithful.

Every now and then we hear of solos sung during Mass, solos with endless repetitions and performed in a manner suited to an opera or a profane concert rather than to a church service. Some people, especially of the so-called fashionable class, come to church to hear the music and to listen to the soloists, whose names have been published beforehand in the press. This is worshipping man rather than God.

And what shall we say about engaging

Organists and Singers

non-Catholics, Protestants and even Jews, as choir singers merely because they have a good voice? Both the divine and ecclesiastical laws, forbid *communicatio in sacris*. This, moralists tell us, may be either active or passive. The law concerning active communication declares (canon 1258) that Catholics may not take part in a non-Catholic religious service. An instruction of the Holy Office (May 1, 1889) distinctly says that only Catholics may sing in the choirs of Catholic churches and that non-Catholics are to be excluded.

The position of the *organist and choir director* is very important. He must be well versed in the theory and practice of sacred music and in the rubrics governing both. There is a vast difference between the music employed by the Church and that which we are accustomed to hear at secular concerts. We need not prove this, but simply refer the reader to the *Motu proprio* of Pope Pius X, dated Nov. 22, 1903, wherein he says:

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"Sacred Music, being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy, participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful. It contributes to the decorum and splendor of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that by it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries. It [sacred music] must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity, not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it."

Do all organists perform their duty in this regard? Unfortunately they do not. In a recent number of the *Caecilia*, a well-known magazine devoted to Church Music (1925, No. 10), the Rev. J. Pierron, D.D., among other things says:

Organists and Singers

"The fatal influence of the profane arts affects principally those who, though entirely ignorant of the sacred liturgy, are entrusted with responsible positions within its scope. Indifferent and also ignorant pastors, from motives which we do not care to discuss, give *carte blanche* to some artist lady or gentleman whose name figures on an occasional programme, but who have not the glimmer of an idea about the meaning and purpose of liturgical music. Fate or the absence of someone not competent, allows them to play a little jazz or sing the latest hit at the monthly meeting of the he-she-its, and forthwith the Church must yield to the superior judgment of the new organist and choir director. Over night the organ loft becomes a misplaced stage, and the church an outraged concert hall. Some years ago we heard such an 'artistic ignoramus' disdainfully exclaim: 'That Caecilian music is distasteful to me.' *Vituperant quod ignorant*. Such is the influence of profane art.

"Mass compositions in rocking three-eighths time and traditional piano accompaniment might make a hit in the cabaret, but as church music they constitute an unpardonable outrage of the liturgical (dogmatic) text."

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In too many places the *Motu proprio* of the saintly Pope Pius X is, unfortunately, still a dead letter.

A word with reference to public prayers said in church. Sometimes these prayers are recited in common by the members of societies or confraternities. One, either the prefect or president, or someone specially appointed, presides at these devotional exercises. Such prayers should always be recited slowly, distinctly, and with correct articulation, without mutilating the words or mumbling. Proper pauses ought to be made and the right emphasis observed.

CHAPTER III

Some Special Acts of Reverence and Devotion

WHENEVER a private meets an officer, he is bound to salute him according to his rank. When a gentleman meets a lady with whom he is acquainted, custom requires him to tip his hat out of respect for her and for womanhood in general. Laymen meeting a priest on the street, especially their own pastor, are supposed to honor him by bidding him the time of the day, for example, "Good morning, Father." A devout Catholic man or boy will always tip his hat to a priest on the street.

The rules of etiquette demand that certain formalities be observed in society if one desires to be regarded as cultured and polite. Now, if such rules are required in

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human society, how much more are they necessary in our dealings with God, who is the Lord of infinite majesty and at the same time our benevolent Father. The marks of love which He constantly bestows upon us ought to keep us on the alert in maintaining certain forms of respect and signs of reverence for Him to whom we owe our whole being. A few suggestions will explain what is meant.

In our country the Blessed Sacrament is not usually carried publicly to the sick. However, when Catholics happen to meet a priest on the street or in a car, and he gives them to understand that he has the pyx with the sacred Host on his person, they should not engage him in conversation, but rather pray with him silently for the one who is about to receive holy communion. Those who attend the sick, when summoning the priest, ought to prepare things beforehand, so that at his arrival all will be

Special Acts of Reverence

ready for the administration of the Sacraments.

There should be in the room a table with a white cover. A crucifix, a vessel with Holy Water, a cup or glass for the ablution, some balls of cotton to wipe off the holy oil after the person has been anointed, and two lighted wax candles must be placed on the table. Good Catholics always have these articles in their homes ready for any emergency that may arise. When the priest is about to administer the last rites, after he has heard the person's confession, the relatives and friends and all Catholics who are in the house should quietly enter the room and pray for the infirm person, especially during the administration of Extreme Unction, as is stated in the ritual.

Another way of paying homage to our Lord is to show honor to His church. Men and boys, in passing a church where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, should tip their

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hat or cap. Women might at least make a slight bow of the head and utter some short prayer or invocation in their hearts. We admit there is no obligation to do these things, but Catholics by such acts profess their faith in the Eucharistic Lord, and may rightly expect to receive a reward in Heaven for these little marks of honor to Almighty God.

What is to be said about visits (we mean private visits) paid to Our Lord in the tabernacle? There are some churches, especially in large cities, where one may find pious worshippers at all hours of the day. Some devout Catholics make it a practice to spend a few moments in the house of God while on their way to work in the morning or on their return in the evening. This pious practice deserves great praise, and the good example that is given in this way will not fail to bear fruit.

Corpus Christi is the day set apart for special homage to the Eucharistic Lord.

Special Acts of Reverence

On this day we should adore Him and thank Him for the inestimable gift He has bestowed upon us by giving us His Flesh and Blood, nay, His whole being, Divinity and Humanity, under the species of bread and wine. We should also try to make some reparation for the offences He has suffered, in particular for the sacrileges committed by unworthy communions and other outrages against the Blessed Sacrament. In some places, especially in country districts or in localities inhabited exclusively by Catholics, the feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated with great pomp and splendor. A public *procession* is held outside the church, and the Blessed Sacrament is carried through the streets and across the fields and meadows. This is an open profession of faith and a solemn manifestation of religion, in which every good and zealous Catholic ought to participate if he can do so without inconvenience.

Well-known devotions to Christ in the

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Holy Eucharist are the *Holy Hour* and the *Forty Hours' Devotion*. Pious Catholics never fail to take part in these services unless prevented by other duties. Special respect should be shown to the Blessed Sacrament on such occasions. When the Sacred Host is publicly exposed in church, we should reverently genuflect with both knees before we enter a pew.

The object of the Holy Hour is to foster love and gratitude towards our Eucharistic Lord. The age in which we live is imbued with materialism. Worldliness, culminating in pride and sensuality, dominates mankind. Good Catholics, therefore, must strive to appease the anger of God and avert the punishments threatening the human race by showing their filial attachment to Jesus Christ, who dwells among us in the tabernacle and is anxious to find souls in which He can take up His abode, according to His own words, "It is my delight to live among the children of men."

Special Acts of Reverence

Few men like to be alone. Most of us enjoy and seek the company of our fellows. We are pleased when we find persons who are congenial to us. But certain conventional forms foster mutual love and respect. Should not this hold good also with regard to our Blessed Redeemer, who condescended to become man in order that He might draw all hearts to Himself and through His human nature lead them to God to give them rest and satisfaction in the bosom of the Divinity?

CHAPTER IV

Genuflections and Bows

For it is written: As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (Rom. XIV, 11.)

WE read in the Gospel that one day a wealthy and well-bred young man asked our Lord what he should do to save his soul. When he approached the Master, he knelt down before Him. We may infer from this that the particular bending of the body called genuflection is a proper and adequate way of expressing reverence and homage to God. By it we openly confess that we believe in Him as our supreme Lord and Ruler, to whom we owe all that we have and are.

Our beloved Saviour Himself has left

Bows and Genuflections

us an example in this regard. When He prayed to His heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemani, He fell down on His knees and touched the earth with His face. Tertullian tells us that in his days (in the third century) the faithful always knelt while praying at divine service, except during the season from Easter till Pentecost, when they prayed in a standing position. A remnant of this ancient custom survives in the ferial Mass of the Ember days and in the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday. "*Flectamus genua*" (let us genuflect), says the priest or deacon, whereupon all bend their knees. "*Levate*" (let all rise), responds the subdeacon or Mass-server, and all arise.

The Catholic liturgy knows two kinds of *genuflections*, the simple (*genuflexio simplex*) and the double. In the first only one knee is bent. It should be done so that a person holding his body erect and keeping his hands folded, slowly touches the floor

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with his right knee. It is not proper, therefore, to give the body a stooping posture or to lay the hands on the leg or knee. It would be still worse to bend the knee but slightly, as if one were afraid to go too far in showing respect or reverence to God.

The double genuflection is made by first bending the right and then the left knee, keeping the body in the same attitude as described above. In rising, the left knee should be elevated first.

When must the *simple genuflection* be made? The rubrics tell us that this genuflection should be made:

1) When one passes before an altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the Tabernacle.

2) When one passes before an altar where Holy Mass is in progress from the Consecration to the Communion.

3) The server (even if he happens to be a priest) should make a simple genuflection as he approaches the altar with the cele-

Bows and Genuflections

brant, and at the end of the Mass before he leaves the altar; this holds even if the Blessed Sacrament is not reserved on that altar.

4) Whenever a person meets a bishop or prelate with episcopal rank, it is proper to genuflect before him and to kiss his ring.

5) In passing before an altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is kept in the Tabernacle, a person should genuflect with one knee.

6) The torch-bearers, who withdraw from the altar after the Consecration, should genuflect on one knee before they carry their torches to the sacristy, and again when they return to their places immediately thereafter. (S. R. Coll., 4135.)

7) From the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday until None on Holy Saturday, all, even the celebrant, in passing before the Cross on the main altar, are required to make a simple genuflection. (S. R. Coll., 3049, ad V; 3059, ad IV.)

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A *double genuflection* must be made on the following occasions:

1) Whenever one enters or leaves a pew in a church where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration, or when one passes in front of the altar of exposition. Whenever Mass is celebrated at such an altar, the acolyte serving the priest should genuflect on both knees in approaching and leaving the altar, but during Mass a simple genuflection should be made. (S. R. Coll., 3426, ad VI.)

2) All must kneel on both knees during the whole Consecration. If one happens to walk by an altar where the priest is at the Consecration, one ought to kneel down and remain in this position until the Consecration is over. For sick persons who are carried to church in chairs it will suffice to bow the head in adoration.

3) When the priest holds the sacred Host over the ciborium just before distributing

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Holy Communion, those who are to receive, and all others who happen to be in church, should genuflect on both knees, looking devoutly at the Host for a second and then bowing their heads.

4) During High Mass (solemn Mass or *Missa cantata*) those in attendance are allowed to sit down when the celebrant and the assisting ministers take their seat on the benches within the sanctuary during the *Gloria* and *Credo*. They should kneel down on both knees while the choir sings the words, "*Et incarnatus est.*" From the Offertory to the Preface, and after Communion, until the priest turns around to sing the *Dominus vobiscum*, the people may remain seated. They ought to kneel from the beginning of the Mass up to the *Gloria*, and again after the *Sanctus*, and remain in this posture during the whole Canon, until the celebrant has consumed the precious Blood, or, rather, until he is about to take the

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second ablution. During the Gospel and Preface all should stand.

5) At a low Mass the worshippers should stand at the two Gospels, but kneel during the rest of the time. Only old people, invalids and those otherwise prevented from kneeling, may sit during a low Mass. The kneeling (and the same holds good of all other positions of the body) must be done in a correct manner, not carelessly. It is, therefore, wrong or at least unbecoming:

a) To bend the upper part of the body back or to let it rest on the heels;

b) To lean forward over the top of the pew or seat;

c) To hold the arms and hands against the face so as to support oneself on one's elbows. While sitting in a pew one should not stretch out or cross the legs, as such an attitude betrays a want of respect.

d) If one feels weak or tired, one may stand up during Mass or other divine serv-

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ice, or (especially if one is sick or aged) sit down. During the Elevation, however, or when Benediction is given with the Blessed Sacrament, all who can do so ought to kneel.

CHAPTER V

The Proper Method of Folding the Hands and Making the Sign of the Cross

And when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame; but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame. (Ex. XVII, 11.)

A PERSON manifests his inward feelings, joy, sorrow, supplication, etc., by the position of his hands. The hands are likewise used to indicate inward devotion at prayer. During prayer they may be folded in three different ways.

1. The simple mode. Place both hands together in front of the breast and in such a way that the thumbs are on top, the right thumb crossing the left thumb whilst the fingers of one hand are placed between the fingers of the other in semi-circular form.

Folding the Hands

It does not look well to let the hands thus folded hang down, or to hold the palms flat against the body, or to raise the hands up to the face so that the index finger touches the chin or nose.

The simple mode of folding the hands ought to be followed whenever a person prays either publicly or in private. It expresses humility, for in that position one appears as bound before God (*vinctus in Deo*; Eph. IV, 1).

2. The solemn mode. The hands are placed in front of the breast and pressed one against the other, the palms touching each other closely and the right thumb crossing the left thumb.

This mode is to be observed on all solemn occasions, such as Benediction, when going to the communion rail, and in serving Mass.

3. There is also a *very* solemn mode. The arms are stretched out and lifted, but no higher than the head. Holy Scripture refers

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to this mode in more than one passage. Thus we read (Ex. XVII, 11 f) :

“And when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel overcame: but if he let them down a little, Amalec overcame. And Moses’ hands were heavy: so they took a stone and put under him, and he sat on it: and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands on both sides. And it came to pass that his hands were not weary until sunset. And Josue put Amalec and his people to flight, by the edge of the sword.”

Again (3 Kings, VIII, 22) it is said of Solomon:

“And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the sight of the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven, and said: Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven above, or on earth beneath: who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that have walked before thee with all their heart.”

Jesus, the Gospel tells us (John XVII, 1), when He was about to pray for His disciples, “lifting up his eyes to heaven, said:

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Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him."

The priest while celebrating Mass (so the rubrics direct) must pray with outstretched hands and arms during the Oration, at the Preface, at the *Pater noster*, and some other parts of the Canon.

It is not customary in this country for lay people to pray publicly in church with outstretched arms or hands. One should remember this and not assume the position mentioned when others are around, because it is likely to attract unnecessary attention or even to cause laughter and ludicrous remarks. But there is no objection to this method when one is alone in church or surrounded by only a few private worshippers. Religious, when assembled in choir, sometimes pray thus. Where it is a recognized custom, no one will find fault with it.

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MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The Sign of the Cross is an act of worship by which we profess faith in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the work of the Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of the Eternal Father, when He offered His bloody sacrifice on Mount Calvary.

Inasmuch as this sign is a strictly religious act, it should always be made in a truly religious spirit, with proper attention and devotion.

The ancient heathens frequently accompanied their undertakings, private as well as public, with a religious act called a libation. The early Christians were strictly forbidden to take part in this ceremony, because it was of an idolatrous character. Instead, they introduced the custom of making the Sign of the Cross. Tertullian and St. Basil (Christian writers of the third and fourth centuries, respectively,) tell us

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that the Sign of the Cross is of Apostolic institution. Later on, when Christianity spread over the civilized world and became deeply interwoven with daily life, the Sign of the Cross came into general use. Representations of the Cross could be seen in homes, on various tools, on the clothing of the people, on their eating and drinking utensils, etc.

The Sign of the Cross has found its way into many liturgical rites prescribed by the Church. At Mass and in the administration of the Sacraments, as well as in blessing persons and objects, the priest frequently makes the Sign of the Cross.

How must the Sign of the Cross be made? There are two forms, the larger and the smaller. The larger form is made as follows: The five fingers of the right hand are held together and the left hand is placed on the breast. The right hand is then raised to the forehead, brought down to the waist, then over to the left shoulder, and finally

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to the right shoulder. The small cross is made with the thumb of the right hand only. The four fingers of the right hand should be extended and held close together; with the thumb (the fleshy part and not the nail) a small cross is made first on the forehead, then on the mouth or lips, and finally on the breast. With either form of the cross the following words are to be spoken: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The Sign of the Cross constitutes a special and characteristic act by which Catholics are supposed to manifest their faith. Protestants, at least those who may be called bigoted, not seldom scoff at it, denouncing it as a "Papist" or "Romish" ceremony. This, however, should never deter Catholics from making this holy sign when there is an occasion for it. A soldier who is ashamed of the uniform he wears, is called a coward or a deserter; must not the same be said of a Catholic who is afraid

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to make the Sign of the Cross because of human respect, because someone might laugh at him or make sneering remarks?

A bad impression is created when a person in church or elsewhere makes the Sign of the Cross in an awkward or careless manner. Some, for example, do not touch the forehead at all, but merely make a hurried circular movement from face to breast. Others fumble around in the air as if they were brushing away flies or other insects. They utter no words, not even in their mind. Does not this look like mockery?

Parents should watch their children at home and teachers instruct their pupils in school, lest a bad custom contracted in early youth remain throughout life. This holds good also of certain religious acts, insignificant though they may seem to be. The Sign of the Cross, made by a dying person or by someone who is present, may help to elicit an act of contrition and thereby save a soul from eternal damnation.

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A curious incident in connection with the Sign of the Cross is reported to have occurred during our Civil War. When, before the Battle of Bull Run, the Northern and Southern armies were facing each other ready for the fray, General Beauregard, who commanded the Confederates, announced the parole by which the friendly troops could recognize one another. General Smith, who was at the head of a division, came too late to ascertain what the parole was, and hence there was danger that his men, in approaching another division of the army of which they constituted a part, might be shot down as enemies. A thought flashed through the mind of General Smith. He would send a man of his division with a letter to the farthest post requesting the parole. This man, of course, had to face death. But after he had been shot, his body could be searched and if the message was found, the rest of the division would be

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saved. General Smith asked for a volunteer to go on this dangerous errand. A fair-looking lad came forward and offered his services. "Do you know," the general asked, "what you are about to do? They will shoot you if you do not know the parole." The young man insisted upon taking the step at the cost of his life. The general thereupon wrote out a short note which this brave soldier was to carry on his breast.

When he came to the post where the guard was standing, the call was heard, "Who is there?" "A good friend," was the response. "Give the parole," the sentinel replied. The young man, not knowing the parole, went ahead courageously. More than one gun was directed against him. Faced with death, he quickly made the Sign of the Cross and, stretching out his hands towards Heaven, awaited his fate. But, behold, the guns were lowered and the young man was greeted as a friend. The

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Sign of the Cross was the parole chosen by General Beauregard, who was a pious Catholic. The Sign of the Cross had saved the young man's life.

CHAPTER VI

Rules to be Observed in Going to Holy Communion

WE often hear about the rules of polite society. Even persons who are not very ceremonious in their ordinary life take care to observe good manners in refined circles. When they attend a banquet or a party, especially if ladies are present, they avoid whatever savors of rudeness or careless behaviour.

Now, should Catholics, who believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, not also observe a certain external etiquette, and thereby give expression of their inward faith and religious conviction?

The Holy Eucharist is a mystery of love. The words spoken by Christ when He was about to institute this great Sacrament,

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“With desire I have longed to eat this pasch with you,” show that it was love for mankind that impelled Him to institute the Blessed Sacrament. Pious Catholics will, therefore, always approach the Holy Table with a deep faith, a strong hope, and an ardent love. They know that in partaking of this holy Food they ought to imitate the angels who, standing before the throne of the Almighty, are filled with profound awe and respect.

The Church has laid down strict rules that must be observed by all communicants. The principal rules are:

1. A person must be fasting from the previous midnight, that is to say, he must not have taken anything digestible in the form of food or drink. The quantity makes no difference. Even the smallest morsel of food that reaches the stomach is sufficient to break the fast. Those who intend to receive Holy Communion during the midnight Mass on Christmas are advised to fast

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for several (perhaps four) hours before that time.

2. No one should approach the Holy Table in the state of mortal sin. If your conscience accuses you of mortal sin, you must first go to confession. A mere act of contrition will not suffice, except in a case of grave and urgent necessity, which happens very seldom. The Council of Trent says: "Lest so great a Sacrament may be received unworthily, and so unto death and condemnation, this Holy Synod ordains and declares that sacramental confession, when a confessor may be had, is of necessity to be made beforehand, by those whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin." (Sess. XIII, can. 11.)

But if a person doubts whether he has given consent to a temptation, or if he is not sure that he has really committed a mortal sin, he need not on that account stay away from Holy Communion.

What of those who have forgotten a mor-

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tal sin in an otherwise well-made confession? Must they confess this forgotten sin before they receive the Holy Eucharist? St. Alphonsus, a great Doctor of the Church, who is considered as an outstanding authority on moral questions, says: "He who, after confession, remembers some sin omitted through forgetfulness, is not bound to confess again before going to Communion; it suffices to declare the sin at his next confession" (*Theol. Mor.*, VI, n. 257).

3. Those who are ready to receive should approach the altar or communion rail clothed neatly and suitably for the occasion. There is no need of putting on finery or to appear in festive attire.

Women and girls are cautioned not to follow indecent or offensive fashions. It is bad enough to adopt such fashions in society, but to approach the Holy Table in an immodest costume is a sin and a source of scandal. Pastors ought to be strict in this regard, give a timely warning, and re-

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fuse Holy Communion to those who do not heed the admonition. There is no need of being prudish, but immodesty must not be tolerated.

4. Communicants should have their hands and face well washed. This applies especially to daily communicants who come on week days early in the morning before going to work. Gloves should not be worn at the Holy Table.

5. When there is a large concourse of people who wish to receive, there should be no hurrying or pushing. When the members of a society receive Communion in a body (perhaps with their regalia or emblems), the others should wait. Someone ought to be appointed to see to it that proper order is observed. A sign should be given to those who are ready to approach and also to those who are ready to recede from the Communion railing.

6. Persons must not leave their place in the pew sooner than they can expect to get

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to the communion railing in a proper and decent manner, especially when there is a large number of communicants. Having arrived at the railing, they ought to make a genuflection with one knee and kneel down at the railing as soon as a place becomes vacant. The same rule is to be observed in retiring; the communicant should genuflect, rise and return to his seat. In going to and coming from the railing all should keep their hands folded.

When the priest who is distributing Holy Communion reaches him, the communicant should slowly open his mouth and stretch out his tongue, so that it projects a little over the lower lip, keeping his eyes half closed. As soon as one feels the sacred Host on his tongue, one ought to draw it in and close his mouth. Care must be taken not to let the sacred species stay on the tongue too long, lest it be totally dissolved before it reaches the stomach. Should the Host, or any particle thereof, adhere to the gums or

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roof of the mouth, loosen it with the tongue and not with the fingers. Never spit out or cough before the sacred species has been completely swallowed.

7. When the communicant has returned to his place, he should kneel down, cover his face with his hands, and pray silently for about five minutes. Jesus comes to us as our best friend and expects that we treat Him as such. We should thank Him in our own words for the inestimable gift He has pleased to bestow upon us. We should also, each in his own way, lay before Him our wants, both of soul and body, and also the needs of others who are near and dear to us, the living as well as the dead. Only after we have spent some time in silent adoration or petition, should we open a book and recite some prayers suitable to the occasion. The whole act of thanksgiving should last about a quarter of an hour. It is improper to kneel just for a few seconds and leave the church at once, to mingle in

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worldly affairs or take part in ordinary conversation. Do not thus deprive yourself of a good deal of the fruit you expect from daily or frequent Communion. Extraordinary circumstances, of course, may sometimes excuse a person for shortening his thanksgiving, but this must always be an exception and never become the rule.

Daily or frequent communicants ought to be on their guard lest, by coming into frequent contact with the Eucharistic Lord, they lose respect for Him. There is a Latin proverb which says: "*Quotidiana vilescent*," i. e., "Everyday things gradually grow stale." Hence it is but proper that pious persons should use some means to prevent that spiritual tepidity which easily creeps in when we allow our nature, corrupted as it is by sin, to obfuscate the light of grace and to quench the ardor of love which should be enkindled and fanned into flames by every Holy Communion. Daily communicants must not only avoid mortal

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sin, but also strive to make real progress towards perfection by cultivating the various Christian virtues, such as humility, patience, charity, and obedience. All that is required is good will, watchfulness, and perseverance. St. Paul says: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. X, 31.)

Catholics who visit Rome are always anxious to obtain an audience with the Pope, and justly so, for he is the Vicar of Christ and the ruler of the universal Church. After they have received notice that they will be admitted to an audience with his Holiness, they make the necessary preparations. They inquire about the ceremonies that must be observed, the dress that must be worn, etc. They procure devotional articles (rosaries, medals, etc.) which they wish to have blessed by the Holy Father. When the hour appointed for the audience arrives, they go to the room or place assigned to them. There they wait in great

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expectation. When his Holiness appears, they gaze upon him with reverence, and when he speaks to them, they feel as if a voice from heaven were addressing them. They carefully say what their heart is desirous of telling him. Afterwards they often reflect on this memorable event and frequently speak about it to their friends. Now, the Lord of eternal majesty surely deserves no less attention or respect than His representative. But alas! not seldom we witness the contrary. Some, after receiving Him in their heart, read a few prayers out of a book and then depart hastily and forget their beloved Saviour, who has deemed them worthy of the greatest gift He could bestow upon them. Jesus was right when He complained to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque of the coldness with which so many Christians are wont to receive Him.

CHAPTER VII

Correct Behavior in the House of God during Holy Mass, at Various Other Divine Services, and at Certain Sacred Functions

"I will go into thy house with
burnt offerings; I will pay thee my
vows, which my lips have uttered."
(Ps. LXV, 13.)

THE church is called the house of the Lord, not only because God is worshipped there, but especially because Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, under the species of bread, deigns to make it His permanent abode. Non-Catholics may speak of their churches as meeting-houses. They have no sacrifice and do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. When they go to church, they pray, sing some hymns, and listen to an address

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made by their minister or preacher. Catholics on the other hand visit church not only when a public service is going on, but also at other times. They know that God is there. Although they do not see Him with their bodily eyes, they perceive Him with the eyes of faith.

The angels, Holy Scripture tells us, tremble before the Almighty and veil their faces in His presence. Shall we, worms of the earth, show less respect to the Lord of Hosts who dwells in our temples? Men observe certain rules of etiquette when they move in high society; should we do less when we approach the Lord of the universe, who is pleased to dwell among us in the tabernacle?

Is there any place on earth that can fill our souls with greater reverence than a Catholic church? The most important religious activities in which we participate take place in the church. The newborn child is brought there to be received into the Com-

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munion of Saints by Baptism. The penitent sinner goes there to be reconciled with God in the Sacrament of Penance. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered there, and the Bread of Life distributed to the faithful. The lifeless body of a Catholic, before it is interred, is taken to church to be blessed, so that it may rise again in glory on the last day. The Sacraments of Confirmation, Holy Orders, and Matrimony are all administered in church. Truly we must feel in church as Josue felt (V, 16) when the Lord said to him: "Loose thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." We should, therefore, conduct ourselves in church in accordance with the holiness of the place. In particular the following rules should be observed:

1. Whenever you go to church to hear Mass or to participate in some other religious service, or even only for private devotion, see to it that you are decently attired.

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Men and boys should not come to the house of God in their shirt-sleeves. Women should keep their heads covered, even if their headgear be only a veil or a small handkerchief.

2. Near the church door idle talk or gossip should cease. To carry a conversation into the vestibule, or, what is worse, into the very body of the church, will cause distraction and be a definite hindrance to devotion.

3. Close to the entrance of the church, or outside in the vestibule, are one or two Holy Water fonts. They are put there for a purpose. Pious Catholics should dip their fingers (not the whole hand) into the water and devoutly bless themselves. An indulgence of 100 days may be gained by making the Sign of the Cross with Holy Water when entering or leaving a church. (Pope Pius IX, 23 March, 1866.)

4. Well-mannered Catholics will not remain standing at the door, but at once pro-

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ceed (not hurriedly, but with dignified and respectful carriage) to the pew or seat where they intend to worship. Having arrived there, they should make a genuflection and utter a short invocation or salutation, such as, "Jesus, my Saviour, be praised!" or "Jesus, be merciful to me, a sinner!" Even if the pews are occupied and one is compelled to remain in the aisle, this genuflection and adoration should not be omitted. Remember that you are in the house of God and that it is proper to salute the Master of the house.

5. The church is no place for conversation. When Moses was approaching the burning bush, he heard a voice issuing therefrom, saying: "Come not nigh hither, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The same is true of our churches. The Lord of Hosts dwells there and in His presence all earthly talk should cease. If it becomes necessary to speak, it should always be done in a subdued tone of voice, not only

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during public service, but also at all other times.

6. Good Catholics make it a point to come to Mass and other devotions on time. If they live at a distance from church, they do not wait until the last bell rings. Many nowadays come to church in automobiles. There is no objection to this, but they should leave home early enough not to miss a considerable part of the service, especially of Holy Mass, and not to disturb others who have come on time.

7. If you arrive before the service has begun, do not remain outside, but enter at once, go up to your pew, and say some private prayers. The custom of congregating outside the church until the *Gloria* or *Credo*, and then coming in in a rush, is, to say the least, far from edifying, and often gives scandal.

8. With regard to the bodily attitudes and postures to be observed in church the following rules should be kept in mind:

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a) At a low Mass all should kneel on both knees, except during the two Gospels, the one before the Offertory or Creed and the other at the end of the Mass. At the beginning of each Gospel all are expected to arise and to remain standing till the Gospel has been read. In some places it seems to be customary for the congregation to stand during the *Credo* and genuflect when the priest genuflects, then sit down from the Offertory to the *Sanctus*, and again from the second ablution to the last blessing. This custom, though somewhat unliturgical, may be tolerated, as long as it is not expressly forbidden by the authorities.

b) At High Mass the congregation should arise when the priest enters the sanctuary and remain standing till Mass begins. Thereupon all kneel down and remain kneeling until the celebrant intones the *Gloria*. When he goes down to the *sedile* or bench to be seated, while the choir sings the *Gloria*, the people also sit down. When

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the celebrant returns to the altar and, facing the people, sings the *Dominus vobiscum*, the faithful arise and stand until the Epistle. During the Epistle they usually sit down. At the Gospel all stand. If after the Gospel a sermon is preached and the day's Gospel is first read in the vernacular, all should stand. During the sermon the congregation is seated. At the beginning of the *Credo* all rise. When the celebrant genuflects during the recitation of the *Credo*, the people should also make a simple genuflection. The *Credo* is continued by the choir. The priest then goes down to the bench, where he remains seated during the singing of the *Credo*. The people also sit during this time, but while the words "*Et incarnatus est*" are sung, all should kneel on both knees and bow their heads. The *Credo* being finished by the choir, the celebrant goes back to the altar and, turning to the people, says, "*Dominus vobiscum.*" At this junc-

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ture the faithful arise and remain standing until the priest has recited the Antiphon of the Offertory. Then they sit down again and remain seated up to the Preface. During the whole Preface they should stand. At the *Sanctus* they should first bow their heads and then kneel down. In this position they remain until the second ablution or until the choir starts the *Communio*. Thereupon they sit down again, but arise when the celebrant sings *Dominus vobiscum*. The blessing is then given by the priest and all kneel, making the Sign of the Cross in the usual way. At the last Gospel all stand and genuflect with the celebrant. The people should not begin to leave the church until the priest has returned to the sacristy.

At a solemn High Mass the ceremonies are the same with these exceptions:

The people remain seated while the celebrant reads the Gospel, but stand while the Gospel is being chanted by the deacon.

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When the censer-bearer incenses the congregation after the Offertory, all should stand and make a slight bow.

c) At Vespers the faithful should watch the priest and the clerics or servers in the sanctuary, and kneel, stand, and sit exactly as they do. During the chanting of the psalms all are seated. All bow at the *Gloria Patri* at the end of each psalm. The rubrics say that at the first strophe of the hymn "*Ave Maris Stella*" all should kneel; likewise during the first strophe of the "*Veni Creator*" on the feast of Pentecost, and also when the words "*Ave Crux*" occur in the hymn "*Vexilla regis prodeunt*" on Passion Sunday.

d) When Benediction is to be given with the Blessed Sacrament, all should kneel down as soon as the tabernacle is opened, and remain in this position throughout the whole exposition and during all the prayers (Litanies, Rosary, etc.). When the priest raises the monstrance, all are expected to

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look at the Host and then bow their heads in deep adoration. All ought to join in the recitation of the divine praises and stand up when the tabernacle door is closed.

9. At the moment of Consecration and at the Elevation which follows immediately after, deep silence must be observed. Loud coughing, sneezing or blowing of the nose, to say nothing of whispering, are out of place at this solemn moment, when the Lord of Hosts deigns to descend from Heaven. The server or acolyte, so the rubrics direct, is to ring the small altar bell three times at each elevation. When the priest exhibits the sacred Host to the people, all for a second should lift their heads, look at the Host, and say with St. Thomas the Apostle: "My Lord and my God!" By doing this they can gain a special indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines. Again, when the chalice is lifted up by the priest, the faithful ought to raise their eyes to it, and thereupon lower their heads in

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silent adoration, saying: "Glory be to the Blood of Jesus!"

It is important that absolute silence prevail at the solemn moment of Consecration. Non-Catholics, who occasionally come to our churches to attend Mass, tell us that they have been deeply edified at this great and mysterious silence. Quite a few, it seems, have been so profoundly impressed that it became for them the first call to the Catholic faith. There is little cause for wonder in this, for at this time the Holy Ghost hovers about the altar in an invisible manner just as He descended in the visible form of a dove when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan.

10. If a person happens to enter the church just as the bell at the altar is ringing for the Consecration, he should kneel down at the door in silent adoration, and proceed to his pew only after the Consecration is over. In like manner, if one walking through the church should pass by a side

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altar at the moment when the Consecration is taking place, one ought to kneel down and wait until the Consecration is over.

11. How should the people behave during a sermon? The gospel tells us that when our Lord was preaching, either out in the open air, on hills and mountains, in the boat on the shore of Lake Genesareth, or in the Temple, crowds stood around and listened to Him. Did they all behave properly? No. Some, it is true, were extremely attentive and respectful. Others, the Pharisees and their followers, exchanged curious looks or showed their disapproval of what He said. Here, kind reader, you have a picture both of what you should do and should not do during a sermon. The sermon preached from the altar railing or pulpit by a priest properly authorized (having the so-called *missio canonica*) is the word of God, a message from Heaven. Even if, owing to human weakness or frailty, the message is defective in form or

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language, it ought to be received as a divine gift. Pious Catholics always bear this in mind and conduct themselves externally and internally as the occasion demands. They sit down becomingly, or, if the church is crowded, remain standing quietly and patiently until the sermon is finished. It shows bad manners to leave the church ostentatiously when the sermon begins, or to show signs of restlessness if the sermon happens to be longer than usual, or to laugh, chat, or move one's head, indicating thereby that the remarks of the preacher do not meet with one's approval.

12. What posture should one assume when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed? The rule is that one must kneel. If the exposition or devotion lasts quite a while and one feels it too hard to remain kneeling all the time, one may stand for a few minutes. Sick or feeble persons may even sit down, but they should show their devotion by bowing their heads, folding their hands, etc.

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Worldly rulers demand that those who are presented to them show a respectful attitude. Has Jesus, the King of Kings, not a right to at least this much?

13. How ought penitents to act who come to church for confession? When there is a large number present, they should wait patiently for their turn. They should not stand so near to the confessional that they can hear what is said either by penitent or priest, but stand or kneel at a reasonable distance. After confession it is well to remain in church to make a short act of thanksgiving or to perform one's penance.

Good Catholics will not talk about what was said in confession, nor will they discuss whether the confessor was severe or lenient.

14. Prayers said in common. When a large number of people are assembled in church, they often say their prayers together. The most popular prayers on such occasions are the Rosary and various litanies. Certain abuses should be guarded

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against. For example, some pray too rapidly and do not pronounce their words distinctly. Others are too slow and do not keep up with the congregation. Prayers said in common should be recited in a moderately loud tone of voice. All ought to observe the correct tempo with proper pauses, a well articulated pronunciation, and the right emphasis, and avoid a mumbling singsong. If one or the other in the group is hoarse or has a highly pitched voice, he will do well not to join with the rest, but simply follow the words mentally or in a whisper.

15. Pious Catholics make it a practice to take a prayer book with them when they go to church, at least, when they intend to spend some time in the house of God. We now have quite a variety of prayer books, well arranged, printed on good paper and substantially bound. Of course they are not all of uniform value or suited to the needs of each individual. If one wishes to buy a new prayer book and does not know which

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one to select, let him ask his pastor or spiritual director. Another suggestion is that the faithful, when assisting at Mass, follow the different parts and prayers in the vernacular just as they are recited by the priest in Latin. "Pray the Mass" is a dictum of Pope Pius X. The Rev. J. E. Moffat, S.J., has recently compiled a booklet which contains the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin and English, and which will enable the faithful to follow the actions of the celebrant with intelligent devotion. Then there are various translations of the complete *Missale Romanum*, which can be used with great profit by the faithful. We recommend especially *The Roman Missal for Every Day* by the Rev. Adrian Fortescue, which contains the special Masses used in English-speaking countries and by the principal religious Orders (Herder). A good explanation of the Mass is *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* by Dr. N. Gehr (Herder).

16. The rules which are usually followed



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in refined society or even in ordinary civil life should also be observed in the house of God. Thus when kneeling in the pew one should keep the upper part of the body erect and not drop into a stooping or lounging posture. It shows bad manners to keep the hands in the pockets or stretch them above the head. When sitting one ought not to cross one's legs. City ordinances forbid spitting on sidewalks, in railroad and street cars. To say the very least, it is proper to observe the same rule in church. If a person has to expectorate on account of a cold, he should use his handkerchief. Chewing is likewise out of place, also all disturbance like heavy walking or running. In the book of Sirach (Ecclus. xix, 27) we read: "The attire of the body, and the laughter of the teeth, and the gait of the man, show what he is." People who do not behave properly in church betray their lack of manners also in ordinary life. They are simply boors.

17. We must not only come to divine serv-

Processions

ice on time, but stay until the service has come to an end. To leave before the service is over is to give a bad example. When the service is over the worshippers should not rush out hastily and block the aisles or cause congestion and disturbance at the door.

18. What about *processions*? In cities or towns where Catholics are in the minority processions cannot very well be held out of doors. Occasions like the Eucharistic Congress at Chicago in 1926, where a grand display of Catholic faith and religion was made, are exceptions. In rural districts where there is a compact and exclusive Catholic population, processions can be held and the Blessed Sacrament carried about publicly without danger of profanation.

Whenever such processions take place, those who participate in them should assume a devout attitude. Men and boys should not wear hats or caps, but walk bareheaded. Women should be decently

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clad and not decked out in the latest fashions, which are often indecent and scandalous. All must keep in line and proceed slowly, either two or four abreast. Talking and curious gazing at things or persons along the way ought to be carefully avoided. The proper way to make a truly religious exercise of a procession is to recite the Rosary or some other prayers (litanies) in common. Congregational singing is also in order, but it should be harmonious and devout.

What about *funerals*? In cities or towns where the cemetery is quite a distance from the church it is customary to go out in autos or other vehicles. The corpse is carried to the burial ground in a hearse. In country parishes the cemetery is usually close by and the mourners walk there on foot. However, whether they ride or walk, those who take part in a funeral should observe a certain decorum. Idle chatting and gesticulating ought to be avoided, for a

Funerals

funeral is no parade. Our plenary and provincial councils as well as diocesan synods have again and again protested against certain innovations which tend to destroy the Christian character of burial. Thus the Provincial Council of Milwaukee (1866) says: "The funerals of the faithful should be religious and simple. All pomp and ostentation, which are of no avail to the soul of the departed, must be avoided. Priests are henceforth strictly forbidden to officiate at a funeral unless the flowers be taken from the coffin before it is brought into church. The rubrics command that in the church the coffin should be covered with a black cloth ornamented with a white cross, the crucifix and the candles. The proper ornaments for a Catholic burial are sincere prayers, communions, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and charitable deeds."

In the *Handbook of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee* (p. 88) we read: "Attention is

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here called to the beautiful custom lately introduced in many places of sending to the family of the deceased person, instead of flowers costing much money and fading away the next day, a so-called spiritual bouquet, that is, the written promise of a number of prayers, holy communions, Masses or other meritorious works for the repose of the soul of the departed. Neat cards printed for this thoroughly Catholic purpose can be had of any Catholic publisher. . . . It is unchristian vanity to engage a large number of vehicles simply for the purpose of appearance or show. If the people can afford it, why not have the sacrifice of the Mass offered more frequently for the dead? If they cannot afford it, it is a sinful pride and injustice to borrow the money or make debts, hard to pay, for the sake of display at the funeral."

19. The dogma of the Incarnation, of the "Word made flesh," constitutes the very foundation of the Catholic faith. In order

The Angelus

to keep it before us, the Church has introduced the devotion known as the *Angelus*. Three times a day, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening (after sundown), the church bell rings to exhort the faithful to recite the *Angelus*, which consists of three versicles, three Hail Marys, a versicle, a response, and an oration. Though this prayer is not of strict obligation, pious Catholics will not fail to recite it whenever they hear the *Angelus* bell. By doing so they make a profession of their faith. Circumstances may sometimes be such as to prevent the open recitation of this prayer. If, for example, we are on the public street or in company with infidels and heretics, who, instead of being edified, would only sneer or mock at an act of religious devotion, it will suffice to recite the *Angelus* silently in our hearts. On the other hand, we should not be cowards and omit this beautiful prayer merely because of some little inconvenience.

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In order to encourage the faithful to recite the *Angelus* the Holy See has attached several indulgences to this pious practice. According to Behringer these indulgences are:

(a) A plenary indulgence once a month, to be gained on any day of the month by all the faithful, who every day, when the bell rings—in the morning, at noon, and in the evening after sundown—kneel and recite the *Angelus*, provided that they also go to confession, receive Holy Communion, and pray according to the intention of the Holy Father.

(b) A partial indulgence of 100 days whenever the *Angelus* is recited in the usual form.

(c) Pope Benedict XIII, who in his brief "*Injunctae nobis*" of September 14th, 1724, had granted the aforesaid indulgences, by a rescript of the S. Congregation of Indulgences of December 5th, 1727, added that religious and other persons living in a community may gain these indulgences even if they cannot say the *Angelus* at the proper time, because they are occupied with some work which prevents them from doing so, provided, however, that they recite the prayer immediately after such work.

The Angelus

(d) Pope Benedict XIV (by a rescript of the Cardinal Vicar, April 20, 1742) ordained that after Vespers on Saturdays and during the entire following Sunday the Angelus should be recited standing. He added that during the Pascal season, instead of the Angelus, the antiphon "Regina coeli" should be said and that the faithful should always stand during the recitation of this antiphon. Those who do not know the antiphon by heart can gain the indulgences by reciting the Angelus.

(e) Pope Pius VI (by a rescript of the Propaganda of the 18th of March, 1781) permitted the faithful in places where the bell is not usually rung to gain all the indulgences, if they say the Angelus or the Regina coeli about the time when the bell is supposed to ring.

(f) Pope Leo XIII (by decree of April 3rd, 1884) declared that the faithful who are reasonably unable to kneel down, or to give any attention to the Angelus bell, may gain the usual indulgences if in the morning, at noon, and in the evening they recite the prayers when it suits them best. If one does not know the prayers by heart, or is unable to read them from a book, one may say five Hail Marys instead.

(g) A decree of the S. Congregation of In-

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dulgences, dated May 20th, 1896, says that at noon on Saturdays during the Lenten season the Angelus ought to be recited in a standing position, likewise that the Regina coeli should be said up to and including Saturday noon before Trinity Sunday.

(h) According to an instruction given by the Secretary of the S. Congregation of Indulgences, dated June 19th, 1885, a person may gain the Indulgences granted for the recitation of the Angelus during the last three days of Holy Week, even though the church bells are not rung at that time. On Holy Saturday noon, however, the Regina coeli must be recited.

20. How should Catholics conduct themselves in church when no service is being held, for example, when they come in, merely to see the interior, to study the architecture, to examine the statues, paintings, stained-glass windows, and other works of art? To begin with, there is no objection against this practice, provided the visitors observe the proper decorum. First of all, such visits must not be made while a public service is taking place, lest

Visiting Churches

the worshippers be distracted and scandalized. Again, those who wish to inspect the works of art in a church ought to do so in a quiet and reverential manner. It is wrong to march through the aisles talking and laughing. The church is the house of God and as such demands respect. Let visitors, therefore, pass through the church in a respectful manner. If they wish to show something to their friends they should do so with becoming gestures. Or again, if they desire to explain things, they should speak in a whisper or at least in a subdued tone of voice. Men, even non-Catholics, should take off their hats or caps. Catholics passing before the main altar, where the Blessed Sacrament is kept, are expected to genuflect. Before other altars a bow of the head will suffice. Consideration should also be shown to those who may be engaged in silent prayer; the visitors ought not to come too near to them or in any way disturb them in their devotions.

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During the Christmas season a crib with an image of the Holy Infant and other figures is erected in many of our churches. Some of these cribs are beautiful to behold. But we must not only admire them as works of art, but also kneel down for a few seconds and say some prayers.

21. Are Catholics allowed to visit the churches (temples or meeting-houses) of non-Catholics? They may do so in order to be present at a wedding or funeral, but may not participate in the religious service which is performed on the occasion.

Furthermore, Catholics may enter these buildings when there is no religious service, for example, to attend a lecture on some profane subject in which they are interested, or for the purpose of studying the architecture or decorations. Whenever they do so, they should take off their hats and conduct themselves as it behooves cultured people.

At Sick Calls

. 22. Whenever religious topics are mentioned in society they should be discussed with proper respect. Should some non-Catholic, or, what is worse, some fallen-away Catholic, make scoffing remarks, or speak of religion or of priests and their functions in a contemptuous or derogatory manner, they should be called to task at once and be given to understand that such language is contrary to the rules of good breeding. The same measures should be adopted whenever persons abuse holy names or sacred things. A polite but firm reproof will silence the haughtiest scoffer.

23. When a person is seriously ill at home, or in a hotel or boarding-house, and asks for the priest, the priest usually comes to his bedside dressed in street garb and carrying the Blessed Sacrament beneath his coat. What should Catholic relations and friends do on such occasions?

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A priest who is summoned to the bedside of a dying person will, as a rule, bring with him everything that he needs for the occasion. In our country, for good reasons, the Sacred Host is not borne to private dwellings in a solemn or strictly liturgical manner. To avoid profanation, the priest goes to the place where the sick person is confined, dressed in his ordinary street clothing, wearing only the stole under his coat, which is sufficiently buttoned up to conceal the pyx with the Host. Catholics who accompany him on the way, or who accidentally meet him on such an errand, ought to have respect enough for the Eucharistic Lord not to engage the priest in unnecessary conversation. When the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament enters the house or room where the sick person is being cared for, all should kneel down and adore the Lord of Hosts. A table covered with a white cloth ought to be set near the bed, a

At Sick Calls

crucifix and two wax candles should be placed on the table, together with a glass of Holy Water, and a cup containing water for the ablution.

When the priest is about to hear the confession of the sick person, all should leave the room. After the confession is over, they should return, kneel down, and recite some prayers (Rosary, Litany, etc.), either aloud or silently, while the priest administers the Viaticum to the dying man, anoints him, and performs the other rites prescribed for the occasion.

Should one all of a sudden become dangerously ill, and no priest be present, charity requires that the person's attention be called to the danger he is in. Acts of faith, hope, and contrition should be recited and the dying person sprinkled with Holy Water from time to time during the death agony, the last struggle between life and death, which is a terrible crisis. Pious Cath-

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olics make it a practice to pray for a happy death every day, lest their earthly pilgrimage end without warning and they be called to eternal judgment unprepared.

CONCLUSION

The Majesty of God

The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. (2 Kings VIII, 11.)

HERE are, strange to say, not a few Catholics who, notwithstanding their faith, and in spite of all they have learned from sermons or books on church etiquette, nevertheless, when it comes to actual performance, fail to do their duty. They resemble the Jews, who, after Christ had driven them out of the Temple, returned to desecrate the habitation of the Lord again by their worldly transactions. Thus Christ was compelled to use the same drastic measures a second time, shortly before His Passion and death. In order that the careless and easy-going people of to-day may real-

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ize and correct their misconduct, a few closing remarks about the Majesty of God seem pertinent.

By the Majesty of God is meant that supreme excellence of the Most High by which He is entitled to deepest respect and absolute submission on the part of His creatures.

In the second book of Moses there is a passage which gives us some idea of God's majesty: "And now the third day was come, and the morning appeared: and behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud, and the people that was in the camp, feared. And when Moses had brought them forth to meet God from the place of the camp, they stood at the bottom of the mount. And all mount Sinai was on a smoke: because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace:

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and all the mount was terrible. And the sound of the trumpet grew by degrees louder and louder, and was drawn out to a greater length: Moses spoke, and God answered him. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, in the very top of the mount, and He called Moses unto the top thereof. And when he was gone up thither, He said unto him: Go down, and charge the people: lest they should have a mind to pass the limits to see the Lord, and a very great multitude of them should perish. The priests also that come to the Lord, let them be sanctified, lest He strike them." (Ex. XIX, 16-22.)

The Israelites who had just left Egypt, had lost the proper respect for Jehovah, because they had lived among heathens for so long a time. They, therefore, needed terrible signs and wonders to inspire their hearts with the holy fear and awe which was to be the life element of the cult which they were to give to the Almighty. The new

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law, the law of Christ, however, is not built upon the excessive fear of the Jewish dispensation,—it rests upon love. This is seen especially in the Holy Eucharist. God Himself, descending again and again from Heaven upon the altar when Holy Mass is celebrated, is constantly with us and embraces us with love and affection. Yet this love should not make Christians forget the sovereign respect they owe to the Most High. Impressive and terrifying is the picture describing the glory of God which the Prophet Ezechiel unfolds before our minds when he says: "This was the vision of the glory of the Lord, and I saw and I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one that spoke, And he said to me: Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak to thee . . . and I heard Him speaking to me." (Ezech. II, 1-2.)

St. John in the Apocalypse, the great prophetic book of the New Testament, which describes the Church and the strug-

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gles of the faithful of diverse ages, attempts to portray the majesty of God's Presence, which had been revealed to him, as follows: "And I turned to see what voice it was that spoke to me; and having turned, I beheld seven golden lamps, and in the midst of the lamps, one like to a Son of man, clothed with a long robe and girt around at the breasts with a golden girdle. But his head and his hair were white as white wool, as snow, and his eyes were like a flame of fire; and in His right hand he had seven stars, and out of his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shining in its power. And when I beheld him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying: Fear not. I am the first and last." (Apoc. I, 12-17; Westminster Version.)

Later on the inspired writer adds: "And I beheld another angel flying in mid-heaven, . . . he said with a loud voice: Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his

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judgment is come; worship him, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and the fountains of water." (Apoc. XIV, VI, 7; Westminster Version)

In obliging priests and religious to recite the Divine Office, the Church requires them to add a short prayer to the Blessed Trinity at the end of each psalm. This prayer should be the motto of every Christian life, the constant echo of the canticle of praise and thanksgiving sung by the angelic choirs in Heaven:

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Amen.



